Mrs. Lois Lee Parker of India

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MRS. LOIS LEE PARKER was the last living link between the early days of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India and the present. That link was broken in the early hours of the morning of June 1, when she died. Sixty-six wonderful years she gave to India.

Mrs. Parker and her husband, the late Bishop Parker, were Vermont people, and in their lives and work were many of the characteristics of the Green Mountain State. Mrs. Parker was brought up a Congregationalist; her marriage to a Methodist preacher, Edwin W. Parker of St. Johnsbury, Vt., gave her to India, where they worked together for nearly forty-two years. Bishop Parker died in Naini Tal, India, on June 3, 1901, one year after his election as missionary bishop of Southern Asia; Mrs. Parker continued his work and hers for another twenty-four years.

Dr. and Mrs. William Butler came to India in 1856, the year before the Indian Mutiny. What property they had was destroyed by the mutineers and they fled for their lives from Bareilly to Naini Tal in 1857. Dr. Butler's appeal for volunteers to help in the work reached Mr. and Mrs. Parker in Vermont; it also reached Thoburn, Waugh, Downey, and a few others. The party sailed from Boston early in April, 1859, on a sailing ship bound for Calcutta, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, laden with apples from Maine, packed in a cargo of Wenham Lake ice. They landed in Calcutta on Aug. 21, 1859, after four months on the seas; they had yet nearly a thousand miles to go before joining Dr. and Mrs. Butler at Bareilly.

The Indian journey was made during the monsoon, the rainy season. They traveled by native flat-bottomed boats, up the Ganges, as far as was possible; the rest of the journey was in palanquins carried by coolies, and took more than a month. It may be imagined what this journey was to young American women. The steamy heat and the almost incessant rain, aggravated by slow and monotonous methods of travel, through a malarious country, taxed their patience and endurance. Added to this were dangers from mutineers, who, though subdued and scattered, were still sullen and dangerous.

I have often been thrilled by Mrs. Parker as she told of the difficulties of those early years. The awful condition of the Indian women and girls nearly broke her heart; the high-caste women and girls were shut up in zenanas; those of the outcastes were mere chattels and beasts of burden. A woman had no rights and few opportunities. Mrs. Parker lived to see miraculous changes in the status of Indian women, though it looks to some of us as if only a beginning had been made.

During their first term in India, the Parkers were sent to a village near Lakhimpur to develop a settlement for Christians, of whom there were very few; in those days people who dared to embrace Christianity became refugees from their homes and had to be protected. The village was in a malarious area and Mrs. Parker suffered from fever until it seemed she must die. Her husband was ordered to take her home to her friends, with little hope of a return to India. But it was not God's will that she should die.

At Bijnor, their first appointment in India, Mrs. Parker began her work for the education of women and girls. So far as is known, there was not a school in India for Indian women and girls. When Mrs. Parker asked a Hindu of high caste to allow her to visit his home and teach his wife and daughters, he said: "You would have better success in trying to teach my cow." Not discouraged, Mrs. Parker began the Bijnor Girls' School with three little low-caste girls; later she organized what is now the Moradabad Girls' High School, the Hardoi Girls' School, and many schools for village Christian girls. She lived to see the day when, in every province in India, the Government is carrying out large plans for the education of women and girls and is giving generous grants to mission schools for girls. The Lois Parker High School Hall at Lal Bagh, Lucknow, and the Lois Lee Parker Girls' School at Bijnor commemorate her name.

Dr. and Mrs. William Butler had left India and were in Boston when Mr. and Mrs. Parker arrived in Boston on their first furlough. The married women missionaries in India realized the impossibility of reaching and helping the women and girls without the aid of unmarried American women, but the Missionary Society, with its limited income, was not able to send out unmarried women. Mrs. Parker and Mrs. Butler interested several women in New England in this project, and, in March, 1869, in Boston, they organized the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Miss Isabella Thoburn, sister of Bishop James M. Thoburn, and Dr. Clara Swain were the first missionaries from this society to India. Mrs. Parker lived to see the splendid Isabella Thoburn College in palatial buildings on the banks of the Goomti at Lucknow, and she spent her last days in the Clara Swain Memorial Hospital, Bareilly, one of the largest and best-equipped hospitals in India. When Mrs. Parker first arrived in India there were hospitals for cows, but not one for women and children. She lived to see mission and Lady Dufferin hospitals in all the cities and larger towns of India. Though a great work for the women and children of India has been done, it seems to us that the work has only begun, as ninety per cent. of the people live in villages and they have scarcely been touched.

In 1919 Mrs. Parker was the central figure and the honored guest of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society at its Jubilee celebration in Boston. Hundreds of women and men will remember her dignified presence and clear, ringing voice, which reached the last person in the great auditorium, as she told of the miracles of God's grace in India. Though she was fêted and honored, she left Boston before the close of the Jubilee and hurried to New York to get a direct boat to Bombay. When urged to remain longer in America, she said, "I must hurry back to my work in India." She was then eighty-five.

The Board of Foreign Missions retires its missionaries at the age of seventy-two, and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society at the age of sixty-seven; but Mrs. Parker never "retired," though she reached the age of nearly ninety-one.

For many years she was almost entirely deaf; yet she kept informed on what was taking place in the world, especially in connection with the work of the church in India. She read widely, and her mind was intensely active. In conversation she read the lips and the expression of one's face. Few things escaped her notice. Her interest in her work continued to her last day of consciousness.

She attended all the important gatherings of the Indian Church. At the Central Conference in Calcutta, last December, she was present and gave an address. She regularly attended the meetings of the Board of Governors of the Isabella Thoburn College and took part in a quiet way.

I last met Mrs. Parker at the graduating exercises of the Theological Seminary at Bareilly, on May 12. For several months she had been in poor health, but she had made a remarkable recovery of her general health, though she had lost the power to walk. She was carried into the church in a chair and remained through the entire program. When I spoke to her she said: "I have been very ill and thought I was going to die. I am very well now, only that I cannot walk. It must be that my work is not yet done." The "work" seemed to be always in her thoughts and plans. A few days after this she wrote to Dr. Core: "Meet me at the train tomorrow morning at five and take me to Hardoi. I have some work there which I must do." But the next morning when she tried to walk she fell and broke her arm. That shock probably hastened her death, which occurred a few days after.

Mrs. Parker's interests and plans were India-wide. She was probably the leader in the organization of the Epworth League in India. A pioneer in educational work for women and girls, she organized the wives of the Indian preachers into a great band of Bible readers in connection with the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, for the instruction of the ignorant village Christian women and girls. Through her initiative a hostel for Indian Christian girls was opened in Agra, that they might study medicine in the Government Medical College. From that institution scores of young women have gone out to relieve the sufferings of their sisters. After the death of Miss Isabella Thoburn, Mrs. Parker was, for a time, acting principal of the Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow. For several years she edited the *Kaukab-i-Hind*, the leading vernacular paper in Indian Methodism. There is probably not an important work in the Indian Church in which Mrs. Parker did not have a part.

For many years she lived alone with her Indian helpers in Hardoi. She had become "Indian" in her thinking. An Indian preacher was superintendent of the Hardoi District, but Mrs. Parker supervised him and all his workers, and they recognized that she had a right to supervise them; they considered it an honor to be supervised by her. They sometimes remarked that she nearly wore them out. After she had passed eighty, she used to order an *ekka*, a springless cart, drawn by a diminutive Indian pony, to be ready for her in the early morning, and she would invite the superintendent to drive with her twenty miles, over broken roads, to visit the Christians in several villages. The next day she was ready for a trip to other villages. She loved the village Christians and they called her "mother." Six years ago she made a tour of the remote parts of the Hardoi District, two hundred miles, which lasted two weeks, and she held forty services in twenty villages.

Bishop and Mrs. Parker had no children of their own, but their spiritual sons

and daughters are an unnumbered multitude who rise up to do honor to their name.

Shortly before his death, Bishop Parker had a vision. Jesus came to him and offered him the choice between living on in India for a longer time, or going across to teach the multitude of Christians who had died without much teaching. Mrs. Parker has gone to help him in that work.

I write as one who was honored by the friendship of Mrs. Parker for nearly forty-two years.

Muttra, India.

My Little House

LOUISE DUNHAM GOLDSBERRY

RAIN—*rain*. All the world is raining. All the road-between is a watery waste and every least puddle is a looking-glass into the sky.

All the night it rained since Epiphany sung the midnight in. All the wet darks thridded with fairy sound as if the spinning of spiders were in the leaves weaving a web for Merlin.

Rain-heavy, the linden leaned over the street-lamp. All its leaves sheer lucencies in the white glow, every leaf a swung lantern in the wind. The tree-toad's threnody lost itself in the drowning night, and even the cricket's fiddling soft and softlier lifted and died into the rain.

All the night, since Epiphany sung the midnight in.

And from the woods an owl cried "Tu-whoo—tu-whoo." And from the linden at my bedroom window a small voice quavered back—"Who-o-o."

All the day it has been raining. Just raining. All the world is just raining. All the road-between is a watery waste.

All the Queen Anne's Lace is gone. And Flower-of-the-Dust—blue Flower-of-the-Dust that stood in two bright groups—two, there were, on one side the up-hill roadway; three, just opposite, the other side the roadway. Nigh enough, those five, to whisper across the road. "Peris at the Gate," I named them. So ethereally blue, the blue beauty of them.

Just Flower-of-the-Dust.

Ethereally, poignantly, intensely blue. They are along every roadside. Even when honeysuckle and rhododendron and wild columbine have faded and elderberry bushes hang black clustered and fox-grapes are ripening, their blue loveliness lingers among withered weeds and gone-to-seed peppergrass and cocoon-cradling sunburnt clover tops. Bits of azure whose blue richens as the hedges and the weedy ditches lapse into raggedness; frayed specters of the roadsides, gaunt and shred of all their wild summer green and flowering.

There's always, late mornings, a languid monotone of insect voice in the stubble and weed-stalks of roadside ditches. The song still sings all night long. Insistent and keen, the few that are at their litany when the lamplighter is going his rounds and the street-lights prick the in-flooding dusks of the street. When the Street of Little Houses pulls down its window shades. Voices lazily chat from porch to porch. Wheels no longer whirl nebulæ of dust against the air as they speed. The night-song biggens; two o'clock, and it is at its *crescendo* apex; three o'clock, still all the night is a sursurge of that "wildly sweet," pulsing, ecstatic ocean of song. And four o'clock and it is stilling, that great night-full of inextricable insect-singings. And five o'clock. Crows are cawing in flight into the gray daybreak; out yonder, past treetops of the patch of woods. A dull sky, glimmering in the lindens. A wind that hangs on the trees and dirges in the leaves and flickers the red lanterns where they danger-mark the gravel-heap left over in sidewalk-making yesterday.

Five o'clock.

A single cricket is still fiddling away as if the rapture of his song had him and he could not let go. Not a robin is abroad in the chill. "No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray." Only that fleeting "Caw" of the crows black-winged off to the fields.

It's so chill. It's so sodden and resentful a daybreak; not a glinting strand in the skies of their golden shimmer of yesterday. Not an island of blue in the all the wide drear waste of sky. It looks like the Atlantic in November; in November, and it is but August yet and the "roads should blossom, the roads be gay" till October turns the trees to masqueraders in brown and bronze and orange and citron and russet and vermilion.

The lindens make moaning and sob. The white dusts come down the road blown along like dervishes in burnoose doing fantastic step and whirl. The rumble of Washington waking comes from beyond Rock Creek. The day is taking up its burden.

I turn off the porch-light. My pencil lags; my thoughts shiver; the leaves are falling; the newspaper boy leaves his paper. The lamplighter's boy turns off the street-lamps; all off, save a faint spark that he always leaves to burn all day ready for his evening rounds. The bread-wagon clatters up.

My Little House is dear to my heart—oh, most dear to my home-loving heart, my Little House in the Street of Little Houses!

What a perfect daybreak for a cup of coffee to brew into magic! What a perfect daybreak to tell fortunes to, in grounds of a pot of coffee!

What a lovely gray day to lean Yesterday against and watch its goldenness against. Back beyond Last Night.

What a perfect gray day to be alive in. To remember the summer in. To dream dreams of next summer in.

What a perfect gray daybreak for a cup of coffee.

In my Little House—*my Little House*—in the Street of Little Houses.

Washington, D. C.

Bits of Fun

——Farmer Hoskins visiting the city was knocked down by an automobile and had to be taken to the hospital. His injuries were not serious, but it worried him to have to let the folks at home know about his accident. He wanted to break it gently to them, so he said to the nurse who was writing a letter for him, "Jest tell 'em on the first page that I'm laid up in the hospital on account of a bile—that'll kinder prepare 'em, and then on the inside page you can tell 'em it was an automo-bile."—*Boston Transcript.*

——"Doctah," asked a lady of color, "Ah's come to see ef yo' am gwine order Rastus one o' dem mustard plasters ag'in today?"

"I think perhaps he had better have one more," answered the medico.

"Well, he says to ax yo' kin he have a slice o' ham wid it, 'count of it's bein' a moighty pow'ful perscription to take alone."—*American Legion Weekly.*

——*Examiner to candidate for the ministry in a Methodist Synod*—"So I gather you read both the Authorized and Revised editions of the Bible?"

Candidate—"Yes."

Examiner—"Well now, perhaps you will tell which of them you like the best?"

Candidate—"Oh, the Authorized Version."

Examiner—"Perhaps you will be good enough to tell us why you like the Authorized the best?"

Candidate—"Oh, yes; *because it is in larger print.*"—*The Christian Recorder*, London.

——A man once found that his wife had bought false hair. This displeased him. He said reproachfully, "Why do you put the hair of another woman upon your head?" "Why," his wife answered, "do you put the skin of another calf upon your hands?"—*Exchange.*

——It was their first trip to London and they were trying to see all the sights. While they knew little of pictures and cared less, they thought it their duty to visit the British Museum.

Among the treasures they looked at was a mummy over which hung a placard, on which was printed "B. C. 97." This completely mystified them.

"What do you make out of that, Henry?" demanded Maria.

"I hardly know," said Henry, "but I have a suspicion that it was the number of the car that killed him."—*Exchange.*

——"Dear me, they say Boston's so cultured that many children have never heard of the Three Bears."

"No, but they've all heard of the Forbears."—*Ames Green Gander.*

Boys & Girls

Pond-Lilies

GERTRUDE FISHER SCOTT

"OH, Charlotte, what a beautiful pond-lily! Where did you get it?" asked Mary, as her little friend came up on to the piazza.

"Mother gave it to me; she has lots of them. A friend brought her a basketful this morning. She said one of her boys got them in the lake."

"What lake?"

"Why, ours, of course. There are thousands of them up in the cove near the ice-house."

"But how do you get them?"

"Oh, you have to row up there in a boat and pull them up out of the water. They don't grow very near the shore."

"Can you row?"

"A little. Can't you?"

"Yes—with one oar, anyway."

"Why did you want to know?"

"I was just thinking I'd like to get some lilies for my mother. She hasn't had any this year and I heard her say the other day that she loved them. Do you think we could?"

"Of course—if we had a boat—and our mothers let us."

"You'd better ask yours—mine's away for the afternoon at a party at Mrs. Baker's."

"Mine's there too. But she said I could stay with you until she stopped here on her way home."

"Well, Bridgie's the only one home in my house to ask. But she's gone up to her room to rest and told me not to disturb her. Perhaps if we hurried we could go and get back before she comes downstairs."

"But where are we going to get a boat?"

"I know where father keeps his padlock key. All we have to do is to go down to the landing and unlock it. The oars are under the back piazza. We can each carry one. Shall we?"

"Yes—I guess it's all right—if you're sure your father won't care."

"Oh, I'm sure he won't. He always says anybody can take his boat if they'll only bring it back again just as they found it."

"And your mother?"

"Oh, she lets me go places—sometimes—without asking her. She won't mind.